

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:45 p.m. at the Miami-Dade Community College, North Campus. In his remarks, he referred to Jerry Sawyer, student body president, and Eduardo Padron, president, Miami-Dade Community College; and Gov. Lawton Chiles and Lt. Gov. Buddy MacKay of Florida.

Statement on Signing War Crimes Disclosure Legislation

October 22, 1996

I have signed into law H.R. 1281, the "War Crimes Disclosure Act." This Act, sponsored by Representative Maloney of New York, urges United States Government agencies to make public any records concerning individuals alleged to have committed Nazi war crimes.

My Administration is committed to ensuring the widest possible disclosure of government documents. On April 17, 1995, I signed Executive Order 12958, which will make available certain previously classified national security documents while safeguarding information critical to our Nation's security. Additionally, my Administration worked closely with the Congress on the recent passage of the Electronic Freedom of Information Act. I believe that our democratic principles require that the American people be informed of the activities of their government.

Over half a century has passed since the conclusion of World War II and the end of the Holocaust, one of the most horrifying periods of genocide in world history. I strongly believe in the central finding of this Act, that it is important to learn all we can about this terrible era so that we can prevent such a catastrophe from ever happening again. To that end, the Act calls for more comprehensive disclosure of documents specific to Nazi war crimes. It is clearly in our public interest to learn any remaining secrets about the Holocaust.

I'm pleased that the Act recognizes the need not to disclose material that is still important to U.S. national security and law enforcement interests. I am hopeful that the Congress and the executive branch will continue to work together to balance the public interests of disclosing government records

with the national interests of keeping certain documents protected.

Ensuring a full accounting of United States records on Nazi war criminals is an important step in preserving the memory of those who died and honoring the sacrifices of those who survived. I was pleased to sign this bill into law.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 22, 1996.

NOTE: H.R. 1281, approved October 19, was assigned Public Law No. 104-309.

Statement on Expansion of Homeownership

October 22, 1996

Owning a home is central to the American dream. So it is good news for all our families that today's report shows that homeownership rates are at a 15-year high.

Strong job growth, low interest rates, and rising incomes have made this expansion in homeownership possible. With the lowest combined unemployment, inflation, and mortgage rates in 28 years, 4.5 million more American families over the past 4 years have been able to realize their dreams and buy a home. In fact, this has been the longest, steadiest expansion of homeownership in three decades.

My administration has worked hard to help more Americans own their own home. By cutting the deficit 60 percent, we helped drive interest rates down. We have cut FHA closing costs for first-time homebuyers and cut the time for an FHA loan approval from 2 months to 2 days. And Secretary Cisneros' "National Partners in Homeownership" initiative has helped broaden and deepen the ranks of homeownership.

Now we must do more to help hard-working American families to buy their own home. My balanced budget plan would keep interest rates from rising. It would allow families to save tax-free in an IRA for the purchase of a first home, and enable all Americans to sell their homes without paying any capital gains taxes.

I am determined to press forward with our economic strategy, so that our economy keeps growing and millions more families can join the ranks of homeowners. If we continue to offer opportunity for all who will work for it, we will build a strong American community for the 21st century.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Miami

October 22, 1996

The President. Thank you.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you. Thank you so much. Well, this crowd's a little rowdy tonight. But it's only 2 weeks until voting time; it's about time to get a little rowdy. So I'm glad to see you.

Let me ask all of you to join me in once again expressing our appreciation to the wonderful, wonderful entertainment we had tonight. *[Applause]* Thank you. Peabo Bryson, thank you. Thank you; you were fabulous. Thank both of you so much. Thank you.

I am so glad to see you here. I'm glad to be up here with Buddy MacKay and Lawton Chiles and Bob Graham. We've all been friends a long time. We've worked together on so many things for so long. We read each other's mind. I think we can say each other's speeches. *[Laughter]* Tonight I was kind of tired; I thought maybe I could be Lawton. He won't talk very long. *[Laughter]* Then maybe I can be me and not talk very long—who knows. *[Laughter]*

Let me say to all of you, I expect to be back here in Florida before this election is over, but—and I have worked hard for this State for 4 years and with your leaders for 4 years in trying to help you overcome the impacts of the hurricane, in trying to help deal with the challenges of education and health care, in trying to help you grow your economy, in trying to help you save your environment, in trying to help you save and enhance the State's program.

This is my last election unless I run for the school board someday. *[Laughter]* For me, as Lawton Chiles said, it all started in Florida in December of 1991. You gave me

the first step up on the road to the White House, and I will never forget that. I will always love you for it and always be grateful. And I'd sure like to go out with a victory in Florida.

We have worked together to try to seize the future not only on the things I mentioned but the Summit of the Americas—which Senator Graham spoke about—the extra efforts we have made over the last 4 years to try to bring freedom to Cuba, the work that we must do—the work that we have done and must continue to do to shore up democracy in the rest of our hemisphere and our neighborhood.

But tonight, I just want to ask you very briefly—this will be brief—to take some time when you go home tonight—I hope you will pat yourself on the back for the contributions you have made and the efforts you have made and then I hope you will redouble your efforts in the next 2 weeks. And I think you can do it if you go home tonight and go through an exercise that I frequently go through myself, if you ask yourselves before you go to bed, “What do I want my country to look like when we start the 21st century just 4 years away? And what do I want my country to be like when my children are my age? What do I want it to be like when my grandchildren are my age?”

We are going through one of those periods of profound change in how we work and live, how we relate to each other, how we relate to the rest of the world. You know it here in Florida and particularly here because you're on the cutting edge of so many of those changes. It is not as if we have an option to repeal those changes. That's nothing I can take credit for. These changes are big, deep, historical currents. The issue is how will we respond to these challenges? How will we make these changes our friend? How will we be able to meet the challenges and preserve our values?

For me, the answer has always been very simple. It's the thing that got me into the Presidential race in 1991. It has driven our administration every day for the last 4 years. It is, what can we do to make sure that when we start that new century in a new millennium, opportunity is still alive for every single person in this country who's willing to be re-